Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT L 01145 300936Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-02 /011 W
----------300944Z 029591 /12
R 300905Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6369

UNCLAS PORT LOUIS 1145

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR PINT MP US
SUBJECT: REVISION OF BACKGROUND NOTES

REF: STATE 312129

1. EMBASSY CANNOT VOUCH FOR ACCURACY OR ORIGIN OF DATA CONTAINED IN BACKGROUND NOTES OF 1974. WE DO, HOWEVER, VOUCH FOR AND VERIFY FIGURES SENT IN BROWN/SMITH LETTER OF DECEMBER 17, 1976.

2. LITERACY RATE OF 61 PERCENT PROVIDED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. OFFICIALS THERE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF RATE EVER BEING LISTED AS 80 PERCENT.

3. POPULATION GROWTH RATE: THE FIGURE OF 1.9 PERCENT (FOR 1972) PROVIDED IN THE 1974 EDITION OF BACKGROUND NOTES IS ERRONEOUS. IN 1972 THE GROWTH RATE WAS 1.17 PERCENT; IN 1973 IT WAS 1.07 PERCENT, ITS LOWEST POINT AFTER FAMILY PLANNING (AND OTHER FACTORS) HAD BROUGHT THE GROWTH RATE DOWN FROM A HIGH IN 1966 OF 2.32 PERCENT. THE MOST RECENT FIGURE OF 1.7 PERCENT WAS PROVIDED BY MAURITIAN FAMILY PLANNING OFFICIALS AS BEING THEIR BEST, CALCULATED ESTIMATE FOR 1976. 1974 AND 1975 BOTH SHOWED INCREASES OVER 1973. IN OTHER WORDS, POPULATION GROWTH RATE IS EDGING UPWARD, AND FAMILY PLANNING OFFICIALS AGREE FULLY WITH STATEMENT THAT BIRTH RATE "IS STILL EXPECTED TO INCREASE SLIGHTLY IN COMING
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 PORT L 01145 300936Z

YEARS." FOR FURTHER BACKGROUND ON THIS SUBJECT DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REVIEW PORT LOUIS 893 OF 11 NOVEMBER 1975 AND PORT LOUIS A-93 OF 24 NOVEMBER 1976.

4. LIFE EXPECTANCY OF 67 YEARS WAS PROVIDED BY GOM'S CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE, AND APPEARS ACCURATE.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

5. LAND UNDER CULTIVATION, 60 PERCENT, TAKEN FROM DATA COMPILED BY THE SUGAR
INDUSTRY AND CONFIRMED BY THE GOM'S
CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE. EMBASSY SPECULATES THAT FIGURE IN PREVIOUS BACKGROUND NOTES DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LAND BROUGHT UNDER CULTIVATION IN THE EXTENSIVE REFORESTATION PROGRAM.

6. LABOR INVOLVED IN AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY: FIGURES PORVIDED AND CONFIRMED BY GOM'S CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE.
7. AMBASSADOR HAS SERIOUS OBJECTION TO LISTING OF US AID AS US DOLLS 1.1 MILLION INSTEAD OF US DOLS 48,000. LATTER FIGURE ACCURATELY STATES AID LEVEL FOR FY 1976, USE OF FIGURE OF US DOLS 1.1 MILLION WOULD GIVE PUBLIC HIGHLY ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION OF CURRENT LEVEL OF USG BILATERAL AID TO MAURITIUS. A STILL MORE ACCURATE FIOURE, BECAUSE IT IS MORE UP-TO-DATE, WOULD BE US DOLS $30,000 FOR FY 1977 (PROJECTED). IF DEPARTMENT WISHES TO LIST TOTAL U.S. BILATERAL AID SINCE INDEPENDENCE, WE HAVE NO OBJECTION, SO LONG AS THE FIGURE IS ACCURATELY LABELLED, E.G., "TOTAL USG BILATERAL AND (1968-76) US DOLS X MILLION."
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EO Systematic Review
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